

**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION**

OFFICE OF ACCOUNTS AND CONTROL

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PURPOSE

To have a state-wide travel agency coordinate all requirements for air travel, surface transportation and lodging for all state employees and/or those individuals utilizing state-related (state, federal, restricted, etc.) dollars, traveling domestically or (as necessary) internationally during a contract period. The state desires to consolidate all travel arrangements and payments, such that meaningful management information can be generated, consistent travel management policies can be developed, and low-cost travel can be effected.

GENERAL POLICY

All personnel traveling under these procedures are expected to exercise prudent responsibility when committing state funds. Travel on business should be conducted at minimum cost for achieving the success of the mission. The traveler is expected to exercise the same care in incurring travel expenses that a prudent person would exercise if traveling at his/her own expense.

PROCEDURES

1. ADMINISTRATION

1.1 All out-of-state travel shall be processed through the travel agency utilizing the Master Price Agreement [MPA]. The MPA includes any travel arrangements which are necessary in the course of an employee's position, but which are paid for with non-state funds.

1.2 The State Controller's Office will be the liaison between the designated travel agent and all state personnel.

1.2.1 The State Controller will be responsible for establishing, interpreting, and administering the guidelines of this policy.

1.2.2 The State Controller is designated as the State Travel Administrator.

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1.2.3 The State Travel Administrator will be responsible for providing assistance and information in accordance with the policies and guidelines established.

1.3 All specific travel arrangements shall be made through the designated travel agency. Travel related problems should be brought directly to the attention of the state travel administrator.

1.4 All personnel authorized to travel may be required to complete a traveler profile application and submit the completed profile to the state designated travel agency.

1.5 Unauthorized travel or travel utilizing an agent other than the state designated travel agency shall require the employee to absorb all related costs.

1.6 Department Directors and/or the Chief Executive Officers of boards, commissions and agencies shall approve all personnel for all out-of-state travel. In absence thereof, only his/her direct assistant shall be allowed to authorize travel.

1.7 Emergency travel demands that arise outside of the normal business hours may be necessary. Department directors or Chief Executive Officers must submit documentation affixed to the travel expense voucher detailing the events necessitating the emergency travel.

1.7.1 The Designated Travel Agency is required to maintain a 24-hour-per-day service.

1.7.2 Travel plans or changes to travel arrangements outside of the normal work-day hours can be completed by calling the toll free number assigned by the Designated Travel Agency and published on the Controller's website.

1.7.3 Emergency travel during normal business hours can be approved by calling the State Travel Administrator or his/her Director.

1.8 In addition to these travel regulations, Department Directors may prescribe their own departmental procedures to strengthen control and accountability of out-of-state travel requirements. Travel request (A-47) forms and travel expense vouchers (A-14) may be obtained from the Office of Accounts and Control web site: <http://controller.admin.ri.gov>.

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1.9 Department Directors and/or the Agency Chief Executive Officers may authorize non-state employees to travel at state expense to conduct state business. The Director shall clearly document that the individual traveler is performing a necessary service, and it is in the best interest of the state to have said individual travel at state expense. The non-state employee will be expected to comply with all guidelines and policies stated in this procedure and will be reimbursed based on this procedure.

1.10 Adhere to the following policies if a third party will be responsible for the costs of a trip by a state employee.

1.10.1 If the third party will pay common carriers, hotel(s), and car rental agency directly and reimburse the employee directly, the employee **may** use the designated state agency or any other travel agency of his/her choosing or travel agency designated by the third party.

1.10.2 If the third party will reimburse the state directly for the costs of common carriers, hotels, car rental agencies, and meals and other travel costs, the employee **must** use the designated state agency only.

2. GUIDELINES

2.1 TRANSPORTATION

2.1.1 Transportation shall be by common carrier and includes air, rail, bus and automobile.

2.1.2 Allowable transportation accommodations will include coach fares, utilizing the most economical fares possible. Most economical fares consist of the travel agency utilizing **ALL** available travel discounts including Saturday night stay-over where beneficial to the state.

Travelers must consider the total costs of an itinerary when traveling to/from a particular destination or area. For example, travelers traveling to/from the Washington DC, Baltimore, and Virginia area will be directed to Baltimore/Washington International (BWI) Airport instead of Reagan or Dulles Airport. This is due to the fact that in most

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circumstances the total cost of transportation (air and ground) into and from BWI is less than air transportation costs alone into Reagan or Dulles.

The state will pay fees/charges assessed by carriers or the designated travel agency for a change in travel arrangements, **if the reason for the change is a business-related emergency**. The traveler will have to explain in writing the business reason for the change.

The state will pay fees/charges assessed by airline carriers or the designated travel agency for re-issuance of an airline ticket, **if the reason for cancellation of the original ticket and re-issuance is business-related**.

2.1.3 The designated state travel agency will be responsible for accounting of all bonus miles obtained by state travelers. Bonus miles and/or other benefits accruing to a state traveler shall be the property of the State of Rhode Island. These bonus credits are to be used **only** for state business, **not personal use**.

2.1.4 Personally owned automobiles may be used for out-of-state travel when it is economical to the state. A detailed analysis is required showing the cost benefit of using a personally owned automobile. Reimbursement will be made on the basis of miles traveled at the current mileage rate or the common carrier fare whichever is lower.

2.1.5 When reimbursement for auto mileage is requested in lieu of common carrier fares, the travel request should contain documentation as to the lower cost. The cost of the lowest common carrier fare should be obtained from the designated state travel agent.

2.2 MEAL ALLOWANCE

Only travelers staying overnight (out-of-state) will be allowed a meal allowance (See CFO 09-11). The reimbursement will still be based on a flat rate and based on departure and arrival times as follows:

If the traveler's scheduled departure time is before noon, they will receive \$30.00 for the first day of travel.

If the traveler's scheduled departure time is after noon, they will receive \$15.00 for the first day of travel.

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If the traveler's scheduled return time is before noon, they will receive \$15.00 for the final day of travel.

If the traveler's scheduled return time is after noon, they will receive \$30.00 for the final day of travel.

All full days between departure day and arrival day will be at the rate of \$30.00.

2.3 LODGING

2.3.1 Lodging will be secured and guaranteed by the designated state travel agent using the agency's ghost purchase card account. Upon departure, the traveler is required to carry a State Hotel Purchase Card and use such card to charge all room and room tax charges. No charges for food including room service or on-site restaurants are allowed on the State Hotel Purchase Card.

2.3.2 Overnight accommodations will **NOT** be allowed within a 55-mile radius of Providence. Distance from home cannot be used in calculating the 55 mile radius.
Note: The 55-mile limitations includes the City of Boston.

2.3.3 Lodging will be secured by the state travel agent at the nearest possible site to the point of destination. Cost will be a factor in the determination of a site.

2.3.4 If lodging is provided by a particular conference and is within reason the most economical in the area, the state travel agent will establish all reservations. However, if the conference has "block rooms" available at a discounted rate, the traveler must make reservations with the hotel directly. Upon departure, the traveler is required to carry a State Hotel Purchase Card and use such card to charge all room and room tax charges.

2.3.5 Lodging will be provided on a single room basis, or the lowest rate available, if a single room is not available.

2.3.6 In the case of a non-employee sharing a room, reimbursement will be at the rate of three quarters (3/4) the double occupancy room rate.

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2.3.7 At the time that reservations for lodging are made, the traveler should inquire about the lowest cost ground transportation to /from any common carrier terminal to the hotel/motel.

2.3.8 In the event of an overcharge for lodging, or the traveler returns earlier than planned, which results in a credit due to the state, the traveler is responsible for obtaining reimbursement from the hotel/motel.

2.4 AUTOMOBILE RENTAL/TRAVEL

2.4.1 Travelers shall avail themselves of shuttle buses and all other means of public transportation to the extent practical.

2.4.2 The use of an automobile rental will be allowed when economically feasible and/or necessary to accomplish the travel mission.

2.4.3 A memo from the traveler must be attached to the travel request form (A-47) addressing the following:

"The State of Rhode Island will save money by the rental of an automobile in lieu of public transportation, due to"; or "It is necessary to use a rental vehicle for the purpose of this trip due to"

Note: Should it be necessary to rent an automobile, the traveler is required to obtain the necessary insurance coverage so as to limit the state from liability. Car rental collision or personal injury insurance is not reimbursable.

2.4.4 The following are obligations of the traveler when renting a vehicle to conduct state business:

- Possess a proper license to operate the vehicle being rented.
- Wear seat belts in accordance with all state laws
- Obey all laws.
- Transporting hitchhikers is prohibited.

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- Consuming drugs or alcohol before or while operating the vehicle is prohibited.
- Complete a report of any vehicle damage and advise your agency immediately.

2.4.5 Travelers shall fill the fuel tank of the rental car prior to returning to the leasing company.

2.4.6 Vehicles may be obtained from the Traveler's Department (pool cars, if available) or from the state motor pool, if available, for ground transportation, where feasible.

2.4.7 Personally owned vehicles may be used for travel in place of common carrier when it is economical to the state. **Example:** When two (2) or more state travelers are traveling to the same destination, or when common carrier service is not available. Reimbursement will be made on the basis of miles traveled at the current mileage rate or the common carrier fare whichever is lower.

2.4.8 Travelers who use their personally owned vehicles to travel to/from a common carrier terminal will be reimbursed as follows:

- Reimbursement will equal the mileage from their work station to/from the terminal when they travel from their work station to and from the terminal.
- Reimbursement will equal the mileage from their home to/from terminal when they travel from their home to and from the terminal (usually before or after work hours and on weekends).

2.5 MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES

2.5.1 The following items will be reimbursable to the traveler in total when **supported by actual receipts**:

- Bus, taxi, airport shuttle service transportation, or rental car gas refill.
- Parking, toll expenses.
- Necessary business telephone calls, fax transmissions or internet connections.

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2.5.2 An allowance of \$5.00 per travel day will be provided to the traveler for gratuities, if required.

2.5.3 Conference and registration fees will be provided when supported by proper documentation.

Note: Credit card charge slips are not acceptable as a receipt unless an **itemized** vendor invoice is attached. Travelers should make every effort to obtain early payment discount of conference/seminar registration fees.

The traveler **will not** be reimbursed for the cost of any conference/seminar social event (golf outing, awards luncheon or dinner, tours, etc.) which is separate from the conference/seminar registration fee.

2.6 REIMBURSEMENT

2.6.1 A travel expense voucher (A-14) must be completed and submitted as soon as the traveler returns, but **no later than five (5) business days** upon returning.

Note: Noncompliance with the above may cause future travel approval to be jeopardized.

2.6.2 Documentation that shall be attached is as follows:

- Travel Itinerary (hotel, air and car rental)
- Tickets , Boarding Passes or Ticketless Itinerary from the airline
- Baggage Fee Receipt (1st bag per traveler, each way only, if applicable)
- Hotel detail bill (from the actual hotel)
- Agendas/Proof of Attendance
- Car rental receipts
- Taxi/shuttle receipts
- Parking receipts
- Justifications for any exceptions that were made (including extra night accommodations)
- Critical Expense Form (where applicable)
- Other supporting documentation

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3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Any employee who has been authorized by his/her department director to travel out-of-state for business purposes shall use the travel agency engaged under the Master Price Agreement to procure transportation and lodging for the business trip.

3.1.1 Each traveler must obtain a State Purchase Order for all travel services required. This PO Number will be required by the State Travel Agent before travel arrangements can be made.

3.1.2 Prepayment for all travel (air, rail, bus, hotel reservations and/or automobile rental) will be provided by the designated state travel agent using the agency's ghost purchase card account; therefore, **NO** advance of cash will be made to the traveler.

3.1.3 The department business office must follow standard Purchasing Rules and Regulations if an advance prepayment is required by a particular conference for registration. If the traveler chooses to pay for the conference out of pocket, he/she will be reimbursed upon returning.

3.2 Upon obtaining the Purchase Order Number, the travel agency can be contacted to request the necessary travel arrangements. Please see Controller's website for current MPA vendor and contact information.

3.2.3 The employee shall provide the following information to the travel agency for billing purposes:

- Identify himself/herself as an employee of the State of Rhode Island.
- Supply the Purchase Order Number and 2-digit alpha code received from agency business office (this alpha code will identify an account for the Travel Agent to charge the travel expenses and service fees via the department's ghost purchase card account)
- Travel itinerary and plans.

3.3 Upon verifying the information, the travel agency shall obtain transportation and lodging in accordance with existing state policies.

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3.4 Upon completion of the arrangements, the travel agency will forward to the traveler a complete itinerary and all necessary tickets.

4. PAYMENTS TO THE TRAVEL AGENCY

4.1 The travel agency will charge each agency's purchase card ghost account for all authorized travel during a purchase card billing cycle. A contact person from each agency shall (1) edit the accounting on the purchase card web site, and (2) print a Transaction Detail with Account Codes and Notes report and the monthly statement from the purchase card web site at month end. The printed statement and the Transaction Detail with Account Codes and Notes report will become part of each agency's monthly reconciliation package and shall be submitted to the State Controller's Office once per month for payment. The Transaction Detail with Account Codes and Notes report must include (listed in no particular order):

- Traveler name.
- Purchase Order number
- Account number(s) charged.
- Transportation charges, including the common carrier name, the departure and destination points, date(s) of travel and total cost.
- Lodging charges, including name and location, date(s) of lodging, and total cost.
- Automobile rental cost (if necessary).

4.2 Upon completion, the State Controller's Office will import all purchase card accounting information (including those for travel charges) into the State Accounting System for payment.

4.2.5 The Controller's Office will charge the appropriate cost to agencies, based on the accounts selected on the purchase card company's web site.

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5. REIMBURSEMENTS

5.1 Upon returning, the traveler must file a travel expense voucher (Form A-14) for reimbursement of the following expenses.

- Conferences/registration fees, if prepayment was not requested.
- Meal allowances.
- Parking fees, toll expenses.
- Shuttle and/or cab fares.
- Other expenses with justification

The travel must include the following with the reimbursement request:

- Travel Itinerary (hotel, air and car rental)
- Tickets , Boarding Passes or Ticketless Itinerary from the airline
- Baggage Fee Receipt (1st bag per traveler, each way only, if applicable)
- Hotel detail bill (from the actual hotel)
- Agendas/Proof of Attendance
- Car rental receipts
- Taxi/shuttle receipts
- Parking receipts
- Justifications for any exceptions that were made (including extra night accommodations)
- Critical Expense Form (where applicable)
- Other supporting documentation

***Note:** The traveler shall pay any additional charges incurred in excess of the room rate and applicable taxes. Although no specific accounting of the types of gratuities is required from the traveler, only gratuities paid for the following types of services are reimbursable: meal (waiter/waitress) tip, baggage carrier tip, hotel room cleaner tip, taxi driver tip, valet services tip and coat checker tip up to a maximum of \$5 per day.

5.2 Upon review of the employee expense report and travel expense voucher, the State Controller's Office will process the payment to the employee.